

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of monitoring the level of optical power in an optical waveguide comprising the steps of:

enclosing a length of the optical waveguide within an insulated cavity;

measuring the temperature T_1 within the cavity;

measuring the temperature T_2 outside the cavity; and

determining the level of optical power in the waveguide based on the temperature difference $T_1 - T_2$.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the temperature T_1 is measured over the length of waveguide.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the temperature T_2 is measured over the length of the waveguide.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the optical waveguide comprises an optical fiber and the walls of the cavity comprise a groove within a substrate and a lid.

5. Apparatus for monitoring the level of optical power in an optical waveguide comprising:

a substrate and lid forming therebetween an elongated insulated cavity for containing the optical waveguide, the cavity having a cross sectional area less than twice that of the waveguide;

a first temperature sensor for measuring the temperature along the waveguide within the cavity; and

a second temperature sensor for measuring the temperature along the waveguide outside the cavity.

6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the waveguide comprises an optical fiber and the cavity comprises a groove in the substrate.

7. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the substrate comprises monocrystalline silicon.